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SUBJECT: MACEDONIA: DPA LEADER THACI ON ICTY CASES, NAME
ISSUE

11. (SBU) Summary: The prosecution of the returned Hague cases by the Macedonian justice system is a violation of the 2002 amnesty law, ethnic Albanian DPA leader Menduh Thaci told Ambassador Reeker in their first meeting October 3. Thaci also said the October 2 meeting of the four major political parties was a "circus" and showed the irresponsibility of the other leaders. Additionally, he explained his reasons for his party's boycott of Parliament and said that they would return as soon as Parliament agreed to recognize Kosovo's independence. End summary.

12. (SBU) The prosecution of the four Hague cases that were returned to Macedonia by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) is a violation of the 2002 amnesty law, Thaci told the Ambassador in their first meeting October 3. Thaci said the opening of these cases implies Albanian guilt and trying them could create larger problems in Macedonia. Thaci believes the best resolution is for the application of the amnesty law to be debated and voted on in Parliament. Thaci said he told Prime Minister Gruevski he understood it was difficult for the PM to concede anything to DUI Leader Ahmeti on the cases since Ahmeti's party had previously been guerillas in the 2001 conflict, adding he offered to publicly support the PM on any concessions he wanted to make. The Ambassador stressed that the cases must be resolved in a fair and transparent manner with the participation of all sides.

13. (SBU) Thaci reported that the October 2 meeting of the four major political parties was a "circus," and that the other party leaders (except him, of course) displayed a complete "lack of maturity and responsibility" for the future of the country. Thaci was referring to a dispute that arose when representatives from the opposition SDSM asked Gruevski to clarify his stance on the name issue, with a free-for-all debate ensuing among the PM, SDSM, and DUI representatives with no resolution. Without giving specifics, Thaci said the PM's actions at the meeting were "ridiculous". Thaci reinforced his support for accession to NATO, emphasizing that accession is critical to e-Albanians and the future of Macedonia, and insisted that the other leaders need to set aside their differences and resolve the name issue immediately. Thaci said he is pushing for more flexibility from the GOM on the name issue.

14. (SBU) The Ambassador told Thaci that his party's participation in Parliament is important to the democratic process and the resolution of Macedonia's current political issues. He encouraged him to end his boycott. Thaci replied that his party would end its boycott of Parliament when Parliament agreed to recognize Kosovo's independence. He added that as the leader of an opposition party, he is the

voice of the "dissatisfied" and feels his party was putting positive pressure on the government to resolve many important, but unpopular issues through its boycott including Kosovo recognition, the name issue, and the ICTY cases.

15. (SBU) The Ambassador emphasized that the June 2008 election violence was very damaging to Macedonia in the eyes of the international community, noting the upcoming Parliamentary elections next spring presented an excellent opportunity for Thaci to display strong leadership by ensuring those elections go smoothly. Thaci was receptive and gracious throughout the meeting and appeared eager to build a positive relationship with the Ambassador.
Reeker